

UNITED CHURCH BOARD FOR WORLD MINISTRIES

NEW YORK
BOSTON
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January 27, 1976

Incorporated 1812 in Massachusetts

NEW YORK
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New York, N.Y. 10027
Cable: Fernstalk New York

President Gerald R. Ford
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

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President
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Dear Mr. President:

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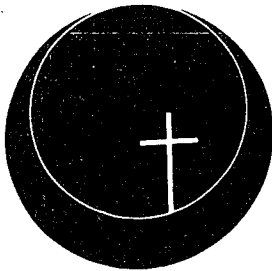
Our United Church Board for World Ministries is deeply concerned about the proposal still before Congress, which would result in the dismemberment of Micronesia, the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific. With the enclosed action, our Board has expressed its strong opposition to the creation of a Northern Marianas Commonwealth.

As the first Christian mission board in our Country, we have been directly involved in the development of the Micronesian people for more than half of the 200 years of our history as a nation. With a Constitution for Micronesia in process of formation and the Congress of Micronesia pleading for a plebiscite throughout the Territory which will honor the principle of self-determination, it is unworthy of our great ~~American tradition to proceed with the separation of the Marianas from the rest of Micronesia.~~ Indeed, such an action in our Bicentennial Year would be an unthinkable betrayal of the best in that tradition.

We present the action by our 250-member corporate board for your consideration and trust that your administration will seek to reverse direction on this move which, by annexing the Marianas, would violate the integrity of the Pacific Trust Territory and rob the Micronesian people of a chance to determine their future status free of such pressures as this prior decision regarding the Marianas would inevitably place upon them. We believe the annexation of the Marianas under these circumstances would present the world with an image of our nation which would do us no credit in the councils of the nations.

Sincerely yours,

Paul R. Gregory
Paul R. Gregory,
General Secretary
Mission Division



PRG:hw
Enclosure

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75-UCBWM-17

SELF-DETERMINATION IN MICRONESIA

VOTED that the following resolution be adopted:

Micronesia is made up of about 2,000 islands in the Central Pacific. Colonized successively by Spain, Germany and Japan, in 1946 it became a trust territory administered by the United States under an agreement negotiated with the United Nations.

The U.S. Pacific Trust Territory of Micronesia is divided into six administrative units: the Marshalls, Ponape, Truk, Yap, Palau, and the Northern Marianas. It is governed by a High Commissioner appointed by the U.S. President, a judiciary appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and the Congress of Micronesia, elected by the population. The High Commissioner has absolute veto power.

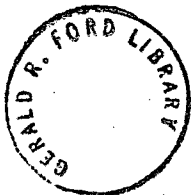
Since 1969 the Congress of Micronesia and the U.S. Government have been engaged in discussions about the future political status of the territory. The debate, still continuing, reflects the differences between the strategic military interests of the U.S. and the interests of Micronesians in their own future. In 1973 the U.S. opened separate negotiations with the Marianas, the only one of the six districts in which American military interests predominate. A \$300-million military installation is proposed for the island of Tinian. A Covenant drawn up by Marinas officials and U.S. negotiators was approved by a June 17, 1975, referendum. Opponents of the Covenant argue that the plebiscite was unfairly represented by the U.S.

WHEREAS:

1. The UCBWM maintains relationships with Micronesia which date from the arrival of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions missionaries from Hawaii in 1853.

2. In 1970 the Congress of Micronesia, the elected representative body in the U.S. Pacific Trust Territory of Micronesia, decisively rejected a proposal which would have conferred on their island "commonwealth" status similar to that of Puerto Rico;

3. Disregarding the action by the Congress of Micronesia and its continuing arguments for greater self-determination, the U.S., after only an English-language publicity campaign in the Marianas (one of six Micronesia districts), called a separate referendum there on June 17, 1975, proposing "commonwealth" status for that district.



4. This referendum was endorsed by a majority vote of the islanders, was quickly ratified by a voice vote of the U.S. House of Representatives with less than 25 members present, and is now being considered by the U.S. Senate;

5. The separation of the Marianas from the rest of Micronesia is in conflict with Paragraph 6 of Resolution 1514 (XV), adopted by the 15th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which Resolution reads as follows:

Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

6. The Commonwealth status suggested for the Marianas falls far short of the full self-government called for in previous U.N. resolutions;

7. The separation of the Marianas is contrary to the views expressed by all Visiting Missions sent to Micronesia by the U.N. Trusteeship Council;

8. There is no precedent in International Law for splitting off part of a Trust Territory;

9. Article 83 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states in 83:1:

"All functions of the United Nations relating to strategic areas, including the approval of the terms of the trusteeship agreements, and of their alternation or amendment, shall be exercised by the Security Council"

has been illegally abrogated, since the proposed separation of the Marianas has not received the approval of the Security Council nor has the United Nations Legal Counsel ruled on whether or not the proposed action regarding the Marianas required Security Council approval;

10. The separation of the Marianas will encourage the further fragmentation of Micronesia;

11. The interest of the U.S. in Micronesia related to U.S. global strategic military policies rather than to the future of the people of Micronesia;

12. The Directors of the UCBWM went on record May 20, 1975, affirming the right of self-determination for the people of the whole Trust Territory and protesting the holding of a separate Marianas plebiscite.

